

CLAIMS

I claim:

- 5 1. A cartridge configured to contain toner which is to be consumed by an imaging device via an outlet opening in the cartridge, the cartridge comprising:
a reservoir configured to contain the toner, wherein the reservoir is coupled in fluid flowing relation to the outlet opening;
a removable seal releasably coupled to the cartridge, and configured to
10 substantially seal the outlet opening while the seal is coupled to the cartridge; and
a pull-ring attached to the seal, wherein the pull-ring is configured to prevent installation of the cartridge into the imaging device while the seal is coupled to the cartridge.
- 15 2. The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the pull-ring comprises:
a narrow end attached to the seal; and
a wide end configured to facilitate grasping the pull-ring.
- 20 3. The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the pull-ring comprises:
a center aperture configured to receive a user's finger.
4. The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the pull-ring comprises:
a rigid material.
- 25 5. The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the pull-ring comprises:
a substantially non-malleable material.
6. The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the removable seal comprises a flexible
30 tape, and wherein the flexible tape is positioned within a slot inside of the cartridge while the flexible tape is couple to the cartridge.

7. The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the pull-ring protrudes from a side of the cartridge.

8. A cartridge configured to contain toner which is to be consumed by an imaging device via an outlet opening in the cartridge, the cartridge comprising:

a reservoir configured to contain the toner, wherein the reservoir is coupled in fluid flowing relation to the outlet opening; and

a flexible tape releasably coupled to the cartridge, wherein the flexible tape is configured to substantially seal the outlet opening while the flexible tape is coupled to the cartridge, and wherein the flexible tape includes at least one end which extends from the cartridge; and

a pull-ring attached to the at least one end of the flexible tape which extends from the cartridge, wherein the pull-ring protrudes from the cartridge to prevent installation of the cartridge into the imaging device while the flexible tape is coupled to the cartridge.

9. The cartridge of claim 8, wherein the pull-ring comprises:

a narrow end attached to the flexible tape; and

a wide end configured to facilitate grasping the pull-ring.

10. The cartridge of claim 8, wherein the pull-ring comprises:

a center aperture configured to receive a user's finger.

11. The cartridge of claim 8, wherein the pull-ring comprises:

a rigid material.

12. The cartridge of claim 8, wherein the pull-ring comprises:

a substantially non-malleable material.

13. The cartridge of claim 8, wherein the flexible tape is configured to be positioned within a slot inside of the cartridge while the flexible tape is couple to the cartridge.

14. An imaging device comprising a receptacle configured to receive a cartridge containing toner, the receptacle being at least partially defined by a blocking surface which in operation prevents the cartridge from being received
5 by the receptacle until a pull-ring attached to a flexible tape has been removed from the cartridge.

15. A method to ensure that a seal is removed from a cartridge configured to contain toner before the cartridge is installed in an imaging device, the method
10 comprising:

providing the cartridge, wherein the cartridge is defined in part by a cartridge housing configured to be received within a designated receptacle within the imaging device;

providing the seal, wherein the seal is releasably coupled to the cartridge;

15 and

providing a pull-ring attached to the seal, wherein the pull-ring protrudes from the cartridge housing to prevent the cartridge from being received within the designated receptacle until the seal has been uncoupled from the cartridge.

20 16. The method of claim 15, wherein after providing the seal, the method further comprises:

uncoupling the seal from the cartridge so that the cartridge can be received within the designated receptacle.

25 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the uncoupling the seal from the cartridge further comprises:

pulling the pull-ring away from the cartridge.

18. A cartridge configured to contain toner which is to be consumed by an imaging device via an outlet opening in the cartridge, the cartridge comprising:

means for releasably sealing the outlet opening to substantially prevent movement of the toner from the cartridge to the imaging device; and

5 means for preventing installation of the cartridge into the imaging device when the outlet opening is sealed.

19. The cartridge of claim 18, wherein the means for releasably sealing the outlet opening comprises a flexible tape.

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20. The cartridge of claim 18, wherein the means for preventing installation of the cartridge into the imaging device comprises a pull-ring which is attached to the means for releasably sealing the outlet opening, and wherein the pull-ring protrudes from the cartridge.

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